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## MILITARY DISOBEDIENCE.

In the last number of the *Advocate*, we endeavored to show, that the only effectual aim Peace Societies could now take for the prevention of war, was the abolition, or, at least, diminution, of military establishments; and we intimated that, in the present number, we should indicate the method by which this is to be effected. We had laid down as a preliminary the ground, that not only war, but that all preparations for it, were sinful in all who participate in them; and our proposal now is, that this doctrine should be urged upon the officers and soldiers of the armies themselves; and all others who are engaged in providing for, and equipping them; a large portion of whom doubtless engage in these services by compulsion, or reluctantly, from a sense of duty, which we propose to show to be false.

To do this, we descend to a principle, cherished everywhere, and by all ages, on which not only military power, but all the tyrannical institutions of nations have been sustained; we mean the moral obligation men, in subordinate stations, have ever considered themselves under to obey, implicitly, the commands of those whose legitimate authority they acknowledge, whatever may be the criminal character of those commands; and the entire exemption from all responsibility, on their part, respecting that character.—The conduct of war is maintained by the power of military obedience; we are to place its prevention on the prevalence of individual disobedience. No maxim of Divine or human law exempts any person from culpability for any crime, on the plea, that such crime was commanded by a superior; and if every man in every community is brought to a conviction that military service is a sin for which he is responsible when he enters that service, and on that ground should refuse enlistment, armies could not be formed; and without soldiers, rulers, however martially disposed, could not carry on war.

Is the diffusion of this doctrine practicable to any effectual extent? When we recollect the arduous efforts, potent inducements and unscrupulous delusions made to obtain recruits, where the enlistments are professed to be voluntary, and the rigorous compulsion used, in those where they are enforced by conscription; the knowledge of the hardships, privations and dangers of military life; the horrors of campaigns and battles, and the capital punishment deemed necessary to prevent desertion; we may safely infer, that, until excited and corrupted by protracted warfare, the privates of armies must generally feel themselves oppressed, and revolt at a service given under the influence of fear, and not of mental concurrence. It is a matter of wonder, that having the numerical power to throw off this galling oppression, men have ever permitted themselves thus to be made the most abject and ill-treated of all slaves: the victims of tyranny over themselves, and the instruments of it to others.

These considerations encourage us to believe, that a course of general, bold, and well sustained teaching, which should show to the privates of armies,

that governments have no right to require of them military service, aiming at the destruction of their fellow-men, and are criminal in doing so; that no Christian is under obligation to obey such requisition, but is in duty bound to refuse it, on pain of the displeasure of God, and everlasting perdition, would be an acceptable doctrine in the ranks of armies; and still more so, with that depressed population in despotic countries, who are constantly liable to be dragged from peaceful occupations to the "tented field." These sentiments have indeed been impressed, to a considerable extent, by the Peace Society of Britain, and with very encouraging effect; but they cannot be safely confined to one nation; they must be diffused through the continents of Europe, Asia and America. The great success of the experiment in England warrants a hope of their universal prevalence, if vigorously promulgated.

For this work self-disregarding, devoted missionaries must be employed; talents, prudence, and true Christian courage is requisite: it will be an enterprise of greater heroism than all the martial achievements of history; for the opposition of deluded patriots, the wrath of despotic rulers, are to be encountered; the solid wall of custom, built on the rock of ages, is to be overthrown. The wild beasts, the faggot and the cross of the ancient persecution of Christians, are not indeed now to be feared; but the incipient progress of this revolution will be probably through a martyrdom; for without this no great beneficent reform has ever blessed the earth; but the result of this martyrdom will be as sure, as great, and glorious as the diffusion of Christianity; it will indeed be its completion; it will be that, and that alone, which will realize the song of Angels—"Peace on earth and good will to-wards man." And let not the martyr in this cause be deterred: in their incarceration or death, there will be victory; the gratitude of ages will be their reward, and in this world the wreath of pacific glory on their brows will eclipse all the laurels of martial conquerors, and glow with ever enduring splendor in the regions of celestial eternity.

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#### MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF ARMS.

IN the London Herald of Peace, for September, 1846, the following circumstance is related: "A person supposed to be in Government employ, called at a house of business, and inquired if certain articles, of which he had a sample, could be manufactured; and on being answered in the affirmative, proceeded to give the order, incidentally mentioning that they were required in balloting for the Militia; this announcement put the friend on his adhesion to 'peace principles,' and, urging his being a member of the Peace Society, finally declined to accept the order." This reminded me of several similar accounts I had seen of refusals to execute military orders in this country, the places and particulars of which I cannot call to mind, and also brought to my recollection the disgust I had often felt at seeing arms and military accoutrements exposed for sale at the shop windows in Boston.

A serious question arises out of these facts, thus combined. Can a pacific Christian be innocently engaged in the making or selling of arms, or any